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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 124557
E.O. 12065: GDS 5/9/86 (WARNE, W.R.)
TAGS: PINT, EQUIP, JM
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO JAMAICA NEEDS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ELECTION PREPARATIONS
REF: (A) KINGSTON 3289 (C) AME LAWRENCE TELCONS WITH
(B) KINGSTON 3339 FRANCIS, COOPER AND LEBOURGEOIS

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE CONFIRMS, AND PROVIDES ADDITIONAL DETAILS, THE INFORMATION DISCUSSED IN THE REFERENCE TELCONS WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBILITIES FOR SUPPORTING THE JAMAICAN ELECTORAL COMMITTEE'S DESIRE FOR ASSISTANCE IN PROMPT PREPARATION OF ELECTION REGISTRATION ROLLS TO FACILITATE EARLY ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 STATE 124557

3. A/ISO (DAS FRANCIS) HAS DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING A POSSIBLE IBM ROLE IN SUPPLYING EQUIPMENT AND PROCESSING ASSISTANCE FOR EARLY PREPARATION OF JAMAICA'S ELECTORAL ROLLS.

(A) THE DATA ENTRY EQUIPMENT IN WHICH THE JAMAICA ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS INTERESTED (IBM 3741S AND 3742S) IS OUT OF PRODUCTION. THE 50 CYCLE MACHINES THAT ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCUSSED ARE AVAILABLE IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD (FOR EXAMPLE, 22 IN AUSTRALIA AND 17 IN SINGAPORE AND 15 IN CANADA) AND IBM COULD PROBABLY ROUND THEM UP AND SHIP THEM TO JAMAICA WITHIN A FEW WEEKS. HOWEVER, THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH THIS IDEA. IBM WILL SHIP MACHINES ONLY FOR SALE, NOT FOR LEASE. IBM ALREADY HAS J $2 MILLION IN JAMAICA THAT IT CANNOT CONVERT INTO US DOLLARS BECAUSE OF EXCHANGE RESTRICTIONS. IBM CONSEQUENTLY WOULD INSIST ON CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY PAYMENT UP FRONT, I.E. APPROXIMATELY US $5,000 PER MACHINE FOR 25 MACHINES. ON THIS POINT, HOWEVER, IBM JAMAICA NOTES THAT IT MIGHT

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BE PREPARED TO BUY BACK THE MACHINES FROM THE GOJ AFTER THE ELECTION NEEDS ARE MET, CONSIDERABLY REDUCING THE NET COST TO THE GOJ.

(B) IBM NOTES THAT THERE ARE SOME 36 IBM 3741/3742 MACHINES ALREADY IN JAMAICA UNDER GOJ OWNERSHIP WHICH MIGHT BE USED FOR THE ELECTION REGISTRATION PROJECT, BUT IBM UNDERSTANDS THE ELECTION COMMITTEE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN THEIR USE FOR ITS PROJECT.

(C) AFTER THE TASK OF ENUMERATING 1.2 MILLIJN VOTER REGISTRANTS AND ENTERING THE DATA, THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE TO PROCESS THEM ON A COMPUTER. AN IBM 370/135 IBM COMPUTER IS AVAILABLE IN JAMAICA FOR THIS PURPOSE.

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(D) THE NEXT STAGE WOULD BE PRINTING OUT THE INFORMATION. A/ISO POINTS OUT THAT THIS WOULD BE A MASSIVE AND EXPENSIVE JOB: TO RECORD 1.2 MILLION VOTERS, SORTED INTO 6,000 ELECTION PRECINCTS BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER OF VOTER NAMES, TRIPLE-SPACED, WILL REQUIRE 60,000 COMPUTER PRINT-OUT PAGES. SINCE THE ELECTION COMMITTEE NEEDS 150 SETS OF COPIES, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES REQUIRED IS APPROXIMATELY 9 MILLION. AT 3 CENTS A PAGE, THIS WOULD COST US $270,000. PRINT TIME WOULD BE ABOUT 20 HOURS. COPY REPRODUCTION TIME WOULD GREATLY EXCEED THAT.

(E) WE BELIEVE THE PROJECT AS ENVISIONED BY THE ELECTION COMMITTEE IS TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE, BUT WOULD BE COSTLY, AND CHANCES OF SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETING THE PROJECT CANNOT BE RATED HIGH, GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY OF ALL OF THE VARIABLES, I.E., PROPERLY TRAINED ENNUMERATORS, PROVIDING THE DATA ENTRY MACHINES TO JAMAICA ON TIME, ETC. ALSO, IBM IS LEERY OF GETTING INVOLVED IN THE PRINTING OF THE DATA, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE TECHNICAL HITCHES THAT COULD DEVELOP BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF POTENTIALLY NEGATIVE POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS IF, FOR EXAMPLE, NAMES WERE LEFT OFF LISTS OR OTHER DISTORTIONS WERE TO APPEAR.

4. A PLAN UNDER WHICH PROPERLY PREPARED ENNUMERATOR CARDS WERE SENT FROM JAMAICA TO A DATA ENTRY,COMPUTER AND PRINT-OUT CENTER OUTSIDE OF JAMAICA IS MORE FEASIBLE AND WOULD HAVE A MUCH HIGHER CHANCE OF SUCCESS THAN SUPPLYING EQUIPMENT AND PROCESSING EQUIPMENT TO JAMAICA. OWEVER, THIS APPROACH WOULL ALSO REQUIRE A LARGE OUTLAY OF CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY. IF DATA ENTRY COST IS 15 CENTS PER RECORD, THE COST OF THIS APPROACH WOULD BE APPROXIMATELY US $180,000. THERE ARE ANY NUMBER OF SUCH CENTERS AVAILABLE, NOT JUST IBM AND NOT JUST IN THE U.S.

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5. ARA/CAR HAS BEEN IN COMMUNICATION WITH IADB ON THIS MATTER. THE BANK IS PREPARED IN PRINCIPLE TO GIVE

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SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO A REQUEST FROM THE ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE, IF CLEARLY SUPPORTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA, FOR AN IADB TEAM OF COMPUTER AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION EXPERTS WHICH COULD GO TO JAMAICA TO ANALYZE JAMAICAN NEEDS TOGETHER WITH THE ELECTION COMMITTEE. THE BANK TEAM COULD ASSIST THE COMMITTEE IN PREPARING A TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROPOSAL TO THE IADB FOR ASSISTANCE IN MEETING THE JAMAICAN ELECTORAL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT. IADB CAUTIONED THAT SUCH A JAMAICAN REQUEST, IF FORTHCOMING, WOULD REQUIRE FORMAL BANK CONSIDERATION. IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE JAMAICAN ELECTION COMMITTEE CONSIDER REQUESTING ASSISTANCE FROM THE OAS.

6. EMBASSY SHOULD REVIEW THESE VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES WITH THE ELECTION COMMITTEE AND INFORM US OF THE RESULTS OF THESE DISCUSSIONS. MUSKIE

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